

# For A HealthierYou

Quarterly Employee Health e-Newsletter



NASA Office of the Chief Health and Medical Officer  
NASA Occupational Health, [www.ohp.nasa.gov](http://www.ohp.nasa.gov)

February 2009  
Issue 4

## Healthy Aging: Three Ways to Test Your Fitness

It is a known fact that the American work force is an aging work force. The employer and the individual employees share a mutual interest: maintaining health and productivity while ensuring safety and performance. In 2009, this *Quarterly e-newsletter*, will focus on a multitude of issues related to Healthy Aging.

Of all the elements related to the health and wellness of the NASA community the one with the most far-reaching potential effects on employee health is habitual exercise which focuses on the health-related components of fitness. These components are listed in order of greatest potential impact on health and disease risk:

- (1) Cardiorespiratory endurance,
- (2) Relative body fatness,
- (3) Muscle strength and endurance, and
- (4) Flexibility.

Most NASA sites have fitness professionals assigned to assist employees in developing personal exercise programs for improving health and for reducing the risks for degenerative diseases and premature death. Exercise programs should be dominated by aerobic activities that improve cardiorespiratory endurance and burn calories, supported by resistance training to improve muscle fitness. Because optimal health-related fitness is not possible without proper nutrition, all programs must include training and education in healthy eating.

The American College of Sport Medicine's (ACSM) Strategic Health Initiative (SHI) on Aging has developed a set of three exercises for people over the age of 60 as ways to assess fitness. Take part after you have consulted with your primary care physician. Then, identify a partner for support. Do your best at each level but do not over-exert. And, warm up for five to eight

minutes by walking and swinging you arms before you start.

### Step One – Measure Lower Body Strength: 30-second Chair Stand

- Sit in chair, seat height at 17", with feet flat on floor
- Cross arms over chest
- Count the number of times in 30 seconds you can come to a full stand

### Step Two – Measure Endurance: 2-minute Step-in-Place

- Let your partner find the point midway between your hip and knee
- Mark that target height on a table leg or a wall
- March for two minutes and count how often the right leg reaches target height

### Step Three – Measures Flexibility: Sit-and-Reach

- Brace chair against wall and sit on edge
- Place one foot flat and extend the other leg with heel on floor and toes upward
- With arms outstretched reach to toe on extended leg
- Note position of fingertips to measure inches short of (-) or beyond (+) toes

### Resources

- **Normal Scores are posted at:** Three Ways to Test your Fitness, by ACSM's SHI on Aging  
[www.agingblueprint.org/PDFs/Test\\_Your\\_Fitness.pdf](http://www.agingblueprint.org/PDFs/Test_Your_Fitness.pdf)
- ACSM's Active Aging Tips,  
[www.nih.gov/nia](http://www.nih.gov/nia)

### Contributors

Larry Wier, Ed.D, NASA JSC  
William Scott Burks, PhD, NASA SSC

**For self-care issues, tips on healthy living, and means of keeping your mind and body primed, visit [www.nasahealthieryou.com](http://www.nasahealthieryou.com). The unique identifier is **healthiernasa**, one word not case sensitive.**